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FEBRUARY 2, 2006 OPEN HOUSE: Summary of Transportation Gaps and Potential Solutions MEMORANDUM #4

for the

Canal Neighborhood Community-Based Transportation Plan

prepared for:

CANAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

Transportation Authority of Marin City of San Rafael

March 9, 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This document was written for the Canal Stakeholder Committee, which is preparing a Community-Based Transportation Plan. Copies of this report are available at www.tam.ca.gov or call 415-499-6528.

INTRODUCTION

This report presents a summary of transportation-related issues identified at the Canal Transportation Plan Open House. These findings represent the problems, referred to here as "transportation gaps", experienced by residents when traveling within the neighborhood or to other locations in San Rafael, Marin County or the Bay Area. Concerns of pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders were all considered. In addition to presenting the transportation gaps, this report identifies potential solutions recommended by both workshop participants and the project's transportation consultant, Wilbur Smith Associates. Initial relative cost estimates of implementation and estimated timeframes are also included for review by TAC and Stakeholder Committee members.

The Canal Transportation Plan Open House was held on February 2, 2006 at the Canal Welcome Center centrally located in the neighborhood. The workshop was held from 5:30 to 8:30 PM and participants were encouraged to stay as long as they wanted, and children were invited to join their parents and share their travel experiences. Materials were available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese and translators were present to assist with recording the comments of participants. More than 60 residents and interested parties attended. A more detailed listing of outreach efforts to advertise and invite Canal stakeholders to this meeting is presented in Summary of Outreach Efforts for the February 2, 2006 Open House (Memorandum #3).

The Open House consisted of five stations. In addition, several displays were available to inform attendees on the status of the Cal Park Hill Tunnel Rehabilitation and Multi-Use Path Construction project, Highway 101 Carpool Lane Gap Closure project and Sonoma-Marin Rail project. The materials presented at the five stations included:

- Station 1 At the first station, participants were welcomed to the workshop, asked to sign-in and given a fact sheet explaining the community-based transportation planning process and the goals of the workshop. A slideshow was running in the background with pictures of the Canal neighborhood and examples of transportation improvements made in other communities.
- Station 2 At Station 2, findings from previous neighborhood and transportation studies were presented on large wall displays. Participants were given dots and asked to place these on issues most important to them in traveling in and out of the neighborhood. The issues were divided by mode, for pedestrian, bicycle, transit and motorist. These issues are included in Appendix A with the corresponding ranking of importance identified at the workshop.
- Station 3 Participants were asked to identify the 'hot spots' or problems encountered while traveling within the Canal neighborhood. Four wall maps were provided, one for each mode to allow participants to place dots at locations where they experience difficulties in walking, bicycling, driving and/or taking transit. Bilingual workshop monitors were on hand to solicit specific details about the traveling problems and record comments. The resulting maps are included in Appendix B.
- Station 4 Station 4 was used to record specifics about traveling outside the Canal neighborhood. Attendees were asked to place dots at locations where it is difficult for them to travel to. Further descriptions of each difficulty were recorded by workshop monitors.
- Station 5 At Station 5, participants were thanked for attending and were provided with materials on
 other transportation-related projects and program information, and upcoming meetings such as the
 upcoming Marin County Transit District's Short Range Transit Plan public meetings.

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Many of the transportation issues brought up in previous studies continue to be of concern for Canal residents. Although many specific details were provided at the workshop, barriers to mobility for Canal residents can be summarized as:

- Lack of access points between Canal and other areas of San Rafael. As a result, travel to locations
 outside the Canal can be circuitous and heavily congested. The barriers formed by the canal and
 highways limit available travel options. Available routes over the Grand Avenue bridge and along
 Bellam Boulevard were considered challenging particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists. Montecito
 Shopping Center and Marin Square were most often noted as difficult to travel to by foot and by
 bicycle.
- Transit continues to be a barrier to Canal residents. Although Golden Gate Transit routes 35 and 36 serving the Canal have the highest ridership of all routes in the local transit system, residents feel that service is not frequent enough, does not offer adequate service in the early morning and late evening hours, and does not provide convenient service to essential destinations. The most frequently mentioned underserved locations included San Pedro Elementary School (for parents) and College of Marin. In addition, residents feel that bus service is very costly especially for the short trip to downtown San Rafael.
- Walking in the neighborhood was a concern for many open house participants. Narrow sidewalks, obstructions on sidewalks, lack of curb ramps, and challenging intersection crossings were all cited as difficulties. Safer crossings of Canal Street and Kerner Blvd with additional crosswalks and stop signs were recommended. The need for access along the canal and a more direct route to nearby locations across the canal to Montecito Shopping Center, San Rafael High School and San Pedro Elementary School were also mentioned.
- Francisco Blvd. East was frequently mentioned as a problem for Canal residents. The heavy traffic, fast travel speeds, narrow sidewalks, narrow travel lanes and infrequent bus stops make it unattractive and difficult for travel by pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and motorists alike.
- Finally, there was general concern about the speed with which drivers travel on neighborhood streets,
 the lack of attention by drivers to stop signs, failure of motorists to yield to pedestrians, and the lack of
 street lighting at night for pedestrians, bicyclists, children exiting school buses and others waiting at
 bus stops.

A detailed list of transportation gaps, potential solutions, relative cost and timeframe is included in Table 1 below. The transportation gaps were identified by participants at the Canal Transportation Plan Open House. Potential solutions were recommended by both workshop participants and the project's transportation consultant, Wilbur Smith Associates. Cost, listed as low, medium and high, is the preliminary relative cost for implementation including estimates for both additional studies and capital improvements. Note that these cost estimates are preliminary and conceptual only. For the purposes of this analysis, low cost is defined as less than \$25,000, medium as \$25,000 - \$250,000 and high cost is more than \$250,000. Timeframes are also preliminary and include consideration of time needed to prepare further studies and identify and secure funding for the project. It is estimated that short-term projects could be started in 1-3 years, medium-term in 3-8 years, and long-term in more than 8 years.

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Mode	Transportation Gap	Potential Solutions - DRAFT	Cost (1)	Timeframe (2)
	Poor pedestrian access to locations north of the Canal via Francisco Blvd East and Grand Ave Bridge (ie Montecito Shopping Center, Downtown, San Rafael High School, etc)	Francisco Blvd East - Widen sidewalk and add buffering between travel lanes and sidewalk. Include street tree plantings	Very High	Long
		Francisco Blvd East - Improve street lighting.	Med-High	Med-Long
		Francisco Blvd East - Improvements and/or enforcement of the roadway to reduce travel speeds.	High-Very	Med-Long
		Grand Ave Bridge - Widen sidewalk.	Very High	Long
Ped		Grand Ave Bridge - Construct ped/bike bridge adjacent to existing bridge.	Very High	Long
		Provide ped/bike pathway along canal for all or part of distance to Grand Ave Bridge.	Very High	Long
		Construct new ped/bike bridge over canal	Very High	Long
		Construct ped/bike tunnel under canal.	Very High	Long
		Provide ferry service across canal.	Very High	Long
Ped	Poor pedestrian access to locations east of the Canal via Bellam Blvd. (ie. Marin Square, Davidson Middle School)	Improve existing pedestrian pathways under freeway overcrossings with pedestrian signals, pedestrian countdown signals, pedestrian refuges, raised crosswalks and street lighting	Very High	Med-Long
		Add additional ped/bike bridge or underpass to cross freeways	Very High	Long
		Widen sidewalks along Bellam Blvd.	Very High	Long
Ped	No pedestrian access to or along canal	Provide ped/bike pathway along canal extending north from existing pathway at Pickleweed Park.	Very High	Long
	Difficult pedestrian crossings at intersections including: Kerner @ Novato Kerner @ Bellam Kerner @ Larkspur Canal @ Novato Canal @ Medway Canal @ Fairfax Canal @ Larkspur	Install standard crosswalks	Low-Med	Short-Med
		Install longitudinal crosswalk markings (ladder style) for greater visibility	Low-Med	Short-Med
Ped		Install stop sign controls	Low	Short-Med
		Install traffic signal controls with pedestrian phase	Med-High	Medium-Long
		Install in-roadway warning lights	Med-High	Med-Long
		Install speed tables or raised intersections to reduce speeds and improve pedestrian visibility	High-Very High	Long
Ped	Pedestrians don't know how much crossing time they have at signalized intersections	Add pedestrian signal phase and/or pedestrian countdown signals at signalized intersections	Med-High	Med-Long

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Mode	Transportation Gap	Potential Solutions - DRAFT	Cost (1)	Timeframe (2)
	On Medway and Canal from E	Traffic calm the roadway to reduce travel speeds	Low-High	Short-Long
Ped	Francisco Blvd. to Novato St fast traffic and no crosswalks	Install crossing improvements at some intersections	Low-Med	Short-Med
Ped	Many intersections are missing curb ramps	Install curb ramps at intersections where they are needed	Med-Very High	Short-Long
Ped	Drivers do not yield to pedestrians at uncontrolled intersections (those without crosswalks/stop signs or signals)	Implement traffic education programs and enforcement (See traffic safety section)	Low-high	Short-Med
	Larkspur St from Kerner to	Clear obstructions from sidewalks	Low-Med	Ongoing
	Canal has heavy pedestrian	Install crossing improvements at some intersections	Low-High	Short-Long
Ped	Ped traffic; narrow sidewalks are obstructed and crosswalks are limited	Traffic calm roadway to reduce speeds	Low-High	Short-Long
	Intersection of Belvedere at Alto/Tiburon has heavy car and pedestrian volumes. The offset at the intersection makes it difficult to navigate safely	Traffic calm roadway to reduce speeds	Low-High	Short-Long
Dod		Install crossing improvements such as stop signs, crosswalks, speed tables	Low-Med	Short-Long
Ped		Reconfigure intersection to eliminate the offset	High-Very High	Long
		Install traffic channeling to direct traffic flows	Med-High	Med-Long
Ped	Sidewalks are too narrow on	Widen sidewalks	Very High	Long
i eu	Medway and Vivian Streets	Clear sidewalk obstructions	Low-Med	Ongoing
		Traffic calm street to reduce traffic speeds	Low-High	Short-Long
	Bicycling is difficult along	Widen roadway to add bike lanes	Very High	Long
Bicycles	Francisco Blvd. East-not enough room on the road to share lanes. Roadway needs paving improvements	Add share-the-road signage or "sharrows" to alert drivers to presence of bicyclists	Low	Short-Med
		Provide alternate route to Francisco Blvd. East with canal pathway, canal crossing or freeway crossing	Very High	Long
		Repave roadway	Very High	Long
Bicycles	Bellam is congested and challenging for bicyclists on	Add bike lanes	Med-Very High	Short-Long
	roadway, especially under the	Widen sidewalk to accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists	Very High	Long
	freeway, making it difficult to	Provide ped/bike alternative to using Bellam	High	Long

Mode	Transportation Gap	Potential Solutions - DRAFT	Cost (1)	Timeframe (2)
	get from Canal to Andersen Dr bike lanes	Add share-the-road signage or "sharrows" to alert drivers to presence of bicyclists	Low	Short-Med
Bicycles	Need more bicycle parking	Install bicycle racks and/or lockers at locations needing bicycle parking	Low	Short-Med
		Increase bus service to Canal	Med-High	Short-Med
		Provide long-term secure bicycle parking to reduce demand of bicycles on buses	Low-Med	Short
Bicycles	Bicycle racks on buses are often full or not available	Develop policy to carry bikes on buses when capacity is available	Low	Short
-	orten full of flot available	Replace existing bus/bike racks with higher capacity racks	Med	Short-Med
		Make sure that all buses in Canal have bike racks	Low-Med	Short
		Improve bicycling access to Canal to reduce bus/bike demand	Low-High	Short-Long
Bicycles	Bicyclists use crosswalks at high speeds	Implement traffic safety and education program (See traffic safety)	Low-High	Short-Med
Transit	Bus drivers are not courteous to passengers	Work with Golden Gate Transit to address the issue	Low-Med	Short
	Transit is eastly for these	Provide transit subsidies for low income residents	Med-High	Med-Long
Transit	Transit is costly for those using it on a daily basis	Institute a reduced fare or free zone from Canal to Downtown (San Rafael Transit Center)	Low-High	Short-Long
Transit	Canal buses (Routes 35 & 36) are very crowded	Run buses more frequently	Med-High	Short-Med
Hansit		Use bigger buses	High	Med-Long
Transit	Transit service is not frequent enough	Run buses more frequently	Med	Short-Med
Transit	Transit service is not adequate during early morning and evening hours	Expand bus service in early morning and late evening hours	Med-High	Short-Med
Transit	Buses do not run on time	Conduct a schedule adherence study for Canal neighborhood and adjust schedule accordingly	Low	Short
	Regular transit service is needed to San Pedro Elementary School	Provide shuttle from Canal to San Pedro Elementary School for parents, etc.	High	Med
Transit		Provide regular bus service to San Pedro Elementary from Canal or Transit Center	High	Med
		Provide taxi subsidy for parents needing to go to San Pedro Elementary School from Canal	Med-High	Short-Med

Mode	Transportation Gap	Potential Solutions - DRAFT	Cost (1)	Timeframe (2)
Transit	School bus stops are located on busy streets which is	Re-examine school bus routing and improve bus stop convenience and safety as needed	Low-High	Short
Hallsit	inconvenient for drivers and difficult for students	Provide crossing guards to assist children in safely loading and unloading of school buses	Med-High	Short-Med
	San Rafael High School	Train drivers to allow students adequate time to unload	Low	Short
	students using public buses are often unable to get off at	Teach students to prepare to unload before bus reaches their destination	Low	Short
Transit	the appropriate location because buses are too crowded and drivers do not give students enough time	Increase bus service to reduce bus crowding	Med-High	Short-Med
Transit	There are few bus stops on Francisco Blvd.	Add additional bus stops along Francisco Blvd.	Low-Med	Short-Med
Transit	Transit is not available south and east of Kerner Blvd	Expand transit service in the area south and east of Kerner Blvd.	Med-High	Short-Med
	Better transit service needed from Canal to: College of Marin	Work with MCTD/Golden Gate Transit to improve service to these locations with direct service, expanded service hours and/or more frequent service	Low-High	Short-Med
Transit	Northgate Mall (weekends) Dominican University (later hours) Kaiser Terra Linda DMV (Novato or Corte Madera) Sausalito Mill Valley/Stinson Beach (weekends) Sleepy Hollow (7:30-3 weekdays) Marin General Hospital	Institute a ride-sharing program in the Canal to promote carpooling as an alternative to transit	Low-Med	Short-Med
Cars	There isn't enough parking in	Provide off-street parking at locations in the neighborhood	High	Long
	the neighborhood	Limit vehicles per family with residential parking permits	Med	Med
Cars	Drivers speed on residential	Traffic calming improvements on certain streets to reduce speeds	Very High	Short-Long
	streets	Implement traffic safety and education programs (see General Traffic Safety below)	Low-High	Short-Med

Mode	Transportation Gap	Potential Solutions - DRAFT	Cost (1)	Timeframe (2)
		Enforce traffic speed limits on residential streets	Low-Med	Short
Cars	It is difficult to drive into and out of the post office on Bellam Blvd.	Reconfigure entry/exit to post office	High-Very High	Med-Long
Cars	People can't understand street sweeping/tow away signs	Add multi-lingual placards to street sweeping/tow away signs	Med	Short-Med
Cars	Medway/Francisco Blvd. intersection is difficult to navigate	Install/reconfigure traffic controls	Med-High	Med-Long
Cars	Difficult to make turns onto Bellam Blvd. from Belvedere St.	Install traffic controls at the intersection	Med-Very High	Med-Long
Cars		Remove obstructions to line of sight at intersection	Low-Med	Short-Med
		Improvements/enforcements on Bellam Blvd. to reduce travel speeds	Low-Very High	Short-Long
	Double parking makes it	Enforce double-parking restrictions	Low	Short
Cars	Cars difficult to drive and walk and increases congestion	Post "No Double Parking" signs in locations where this activity often occurs (Francisco Blvd. in Bahia area and on Belvedere)	Low-Med	Short-Med
	Difficult to make left turns onto Canal Street	Install traffic controls at some intersection	Med-High	Short-Long
Cars		Remove obstructions to line of sight at intersection	Low-Med	Short
Cais		Traffic calming improvements/enforcement on Canal St. to reduce travel speeds	Low-Very High	Short-Long
Cars	Traffic from Canal via Grand Ave bridge is very congested,	Reduce auto travel demand by improving transit, bicycle and pedestrian access	Low-Very High	Short-Long
	especially during A.M. peak	Improve/adjust signal timing in this area	Med-High	Med-Long

Mode	Transportation Gap	Potential Solutions - DRAFT	Cost (1)	Timeframe (2)
Traffic safety	Pedestrians jaywalk Drivers do not yield to pedestrians at uncontrolled intersections (those without crosswalks/stop signs or signals) Drivers do not yield to flashing red lights on school buses Drivers do not make complete stops at stop signs on Medway	Implement a street safety program in the Canal making use of existing traffic safety programs and co-sponsored by City police, school district, neighborhood organizations, etc. Sample existing programs include: - Safe routes to school - Safe routes to transit - Enforcement - Traffic school for adult and juvenile offenders - 'Street Smarts' public education campaign that targets drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists-previously used in San Jose - Traffic calming program targeted at lowering speeds in residential communities with measure from enforcement, radar speed trailers to speed humps and road closures Bicycle education programs from League of American Bicyclists	Low-Very High	Short-Long
T (C)	Difficult to see people walking	Improve line of sight at intersections by removing visual obstructions Improve street lighting especially at intersections	Med Low-High	Med-Long Med-Long
Traffic	and bicycling through intersections	Provide crosswalks, stop signs or traffic signals at some intersections	Low-Very High	Short-Long
safety		Traffic calm streets to reduce traffic speeds	Low-Very High	Short-Long
		Educate pedestrians and bicyclists on traffic safety	Low-Med	Short-Med
	There are few access points	Increase pedestrian and bicycle access with additional canal and freeway crossings	High-Very High	Long
All	into neighborhood from other areas of the city	Provide a pedestrian bridge over Highway 101 from Francisco Blvd West to Canal neighborhood	Very High	Long
		Provide a Kerner/Andersen connection south of neighborhood	Very High	Long
AII	Some Canal neighborhood	Install additional street lighting on Canal streets, especially at bus stops and intersections	Low-Very High	Med-Long
AII	streets are dark	Use lighting that is more pedestrian scale	High-Very High	Med-Long

⁽¹⁾ Cost - Short = Below \$25,000; Medium = \$25,000-\$250,000; High = \$250,000 - \$500,000; Very High = More than \$500,000.

⁽²⁾ Timeframe - Short-Term = 1-3 years; Medium-Term = 3-8 years; Long-Term = More than 8 years. NOTE: Cost and Timeframe are only draft ideas and additional study is necessary

APPENDIX A – Prioritization Issues Previously Identified Canal Neighborhood Community-Based Transportation Plan

Participants were asked to note which issues that we've heard about in the past are a priority issue today.

Bus/Transito

Issue	# Respondents
Transit is costly for those who use it on a daily basis. El sistema de transito es caro para aquellos que lo usan diariamente.	20
Some bus drivers are not courteous to riders. Algunos chóferes de autobús no son cordiales con los pasajeros.	34
There are not enough transit buses in the Canal. No hay suficientes autobuses en el Área de Canal.	12
The buses don't run frequently enough (i.e., at least every 30 minutes). Los autobuses no pasan con suficiente frecuencia (por ejemplo, al menos cada 30 minutos.)	10
There are not enough early morning and late buses from the Canal to places of work. No hay suficiente cantidad de autobuses temprano en la mañana y ya en la tarde del Área de Canal a los lugares de trabajo.	13
The buses don't run on time. Los autobuses no pasan a la hora que deben.	12
Routes 35 and 36 are very crowded. Las rutas 35 y 36 están muy apretadas.	13
School bus stops are inconvenient for drivers. Las paradas del autobús están en áreas inconvenientes para los chóferes.	2
There is no bus transportation to San Pedro Elementary School. No hay transportación de autobús para la Escuela Primaria de San Pedro.	16

Bikes / Bicicletas

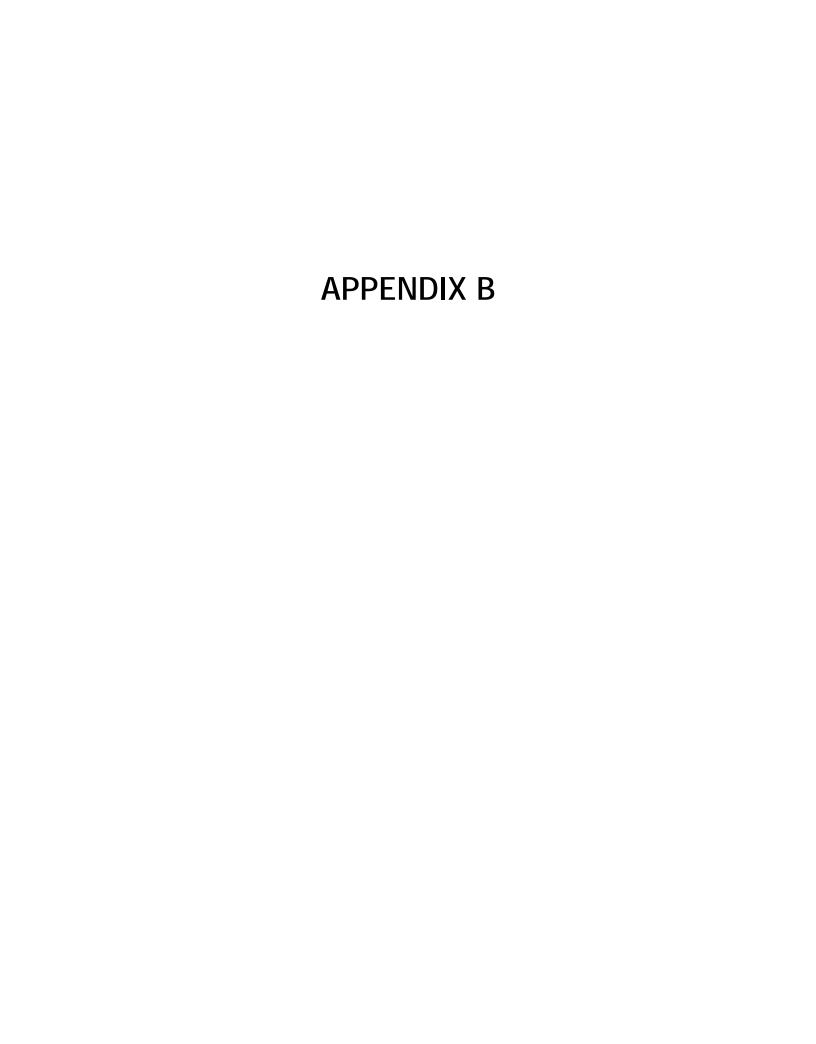
Issue	# Respondents
There are not enough places to park bicycles.	2
No hay suficientes lugares para estacionar las bicicletas.	
There isn't enough room to bike safely along Francisco Blvd. East.	16
No hay suficiente lugar en la carretera para andar en bicicleta en la calle Francisco Blvd. East.	
Car congestion along Bellam Blvd. under the 580 overcrossing means that bicyclists have to walk their bike on the sidewalk.	7
El congestionamiento a lo largo de Bellam Blvd. debajo del Puente del 580 hace que los ciclistas tengan que caminar sus bicicletas en la acera.	
It is difficult to get from the Canal neighborhood to the Andersen Drive bike lanes.	7
Es difícil llegar del vecindario de Canal a las líneas de bicicletas que están en la calle Andersen Drive.	
The buses do not have enough places to carry bikes.	5
Los autobuses no tienen suficientes lugares para llevar las bicicletas.	

Pedestrians / Los Peatones

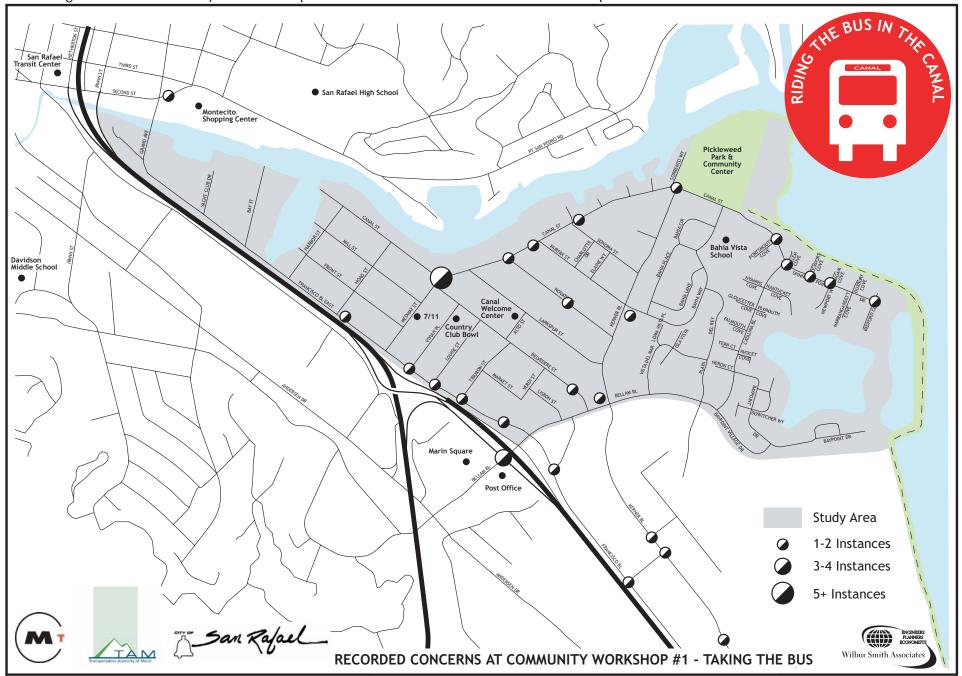
Issue	# Respondents
There aren't any street trees along the neighborhood streets. No hay árboles a lo largo de las calles en la comunidad.	2
There should be more wheelchair ramps on the sidewalks. Debería haber mas rampas para sillas de ruedas en las banquetas.	5
There aren't enough crosswalks on neighborhood streets. No hay suficientes áreas para cruzar las calles en la comunidad.	4
I don't know how much time I have to cross a street where there is a signal. Yo no se cuanto tiempo para cruzar una calle donde hay semáforos o señales de trafico.	6
The sidewalks are too narrow on Medway and Vivian streets. Las aceras están muy angostas en las calles Medway y Vivian.	1
There is not enough lighting along Francisco Blvd. East. No hay suficiente luz a lo largo de la calle Francisco Blvd. East	3
Francisco Blvd. East is a dangerous and ugly street to walk along. La calle Francisco Blvd. East es peligrosa y fea para caminar por ahí.	6
There isn't good access to walk to or along the Canal waterway. No hay suficiente acceso para caminar a lo largo del canal (de agua) en Canal.	8
The sidewalk on the Grand Avenue bridge is narrow for number of people who use it. La acera del puentecito de la Avenida Grand esta muy angosta para la cantidad de gente que la usa.	4
It is a long walk from the Canal to Downtown and Montecito Shopping Center. Es una caminata muy larga de Canal al Centro de San Rafael o al Centro Comercial Montecito.	8
It's not easy to walk to Marin Square. No es fácil caminar hacia Marin Square.	0
It's not easy to walk to Borders Books and Toys R Us. No es fácil caminar al centro comercial donde están la tienda de libros "Borders Books" y tienda de juguetes Toys R Us.	11
It's hard to walk to Davidson Middle School and San Rafael High School. Es difícil caminar a las escuelas: Davidson Middle School y San Rafael High School.	10

Cars / Automóviles

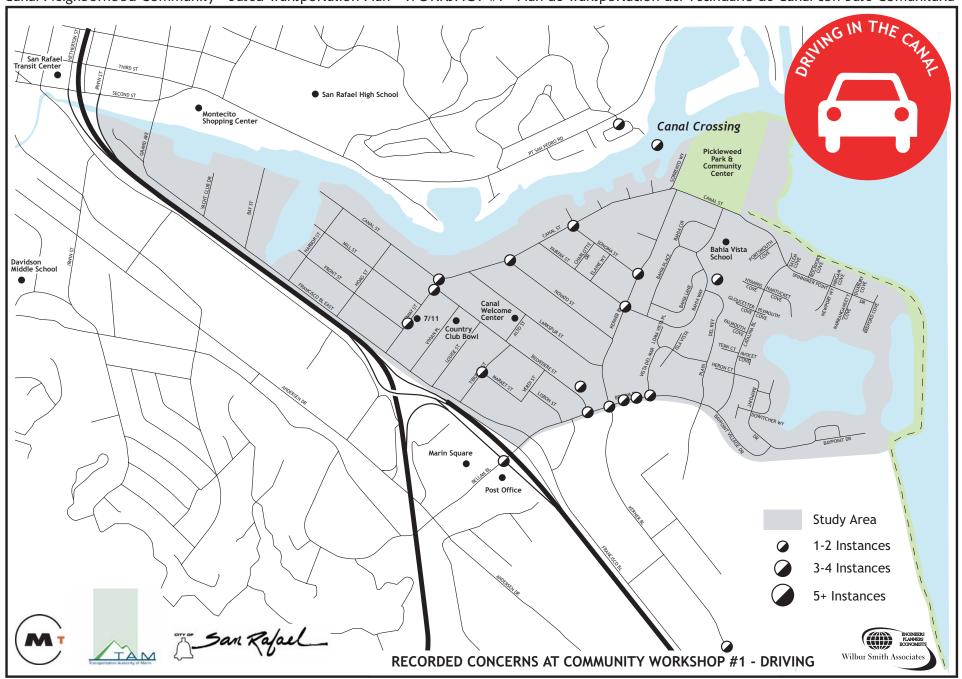
Issue	# Respondents
There aren't enough parking spaces in the neighborhood. No hay suficiente estacionamiento en la comunidad.	25
There are very few access points into the neighborhood from other areas of the city. Hay muy pocas entradas a la comunidad de otras áreas de la ciudad.	5
It's hard to drive in to and out of the Post Office on Bellam. Es difícil manejar para adentro y para afuera de la oficina de correos que esta en la calle Bellam.	9
People drive too fast on neighborhood streets. La gente maneja muy rápido en las calles de la comunidad.	24
There is not enough notice for cars to be towed on street sweeping days. No hay suficiente advertencia notificando que la grúa se llevara los carros el día que se barren las calles.	5
I don't understand the street signs in the neighborhood. No entiendo las señales de trafico en la comunidad.	0
At the intersections, it's difficult to see people walking or bicycling through. En el crucero, es dificultoso ver a la gente que pasa caminando o que va en bicicleta.	9



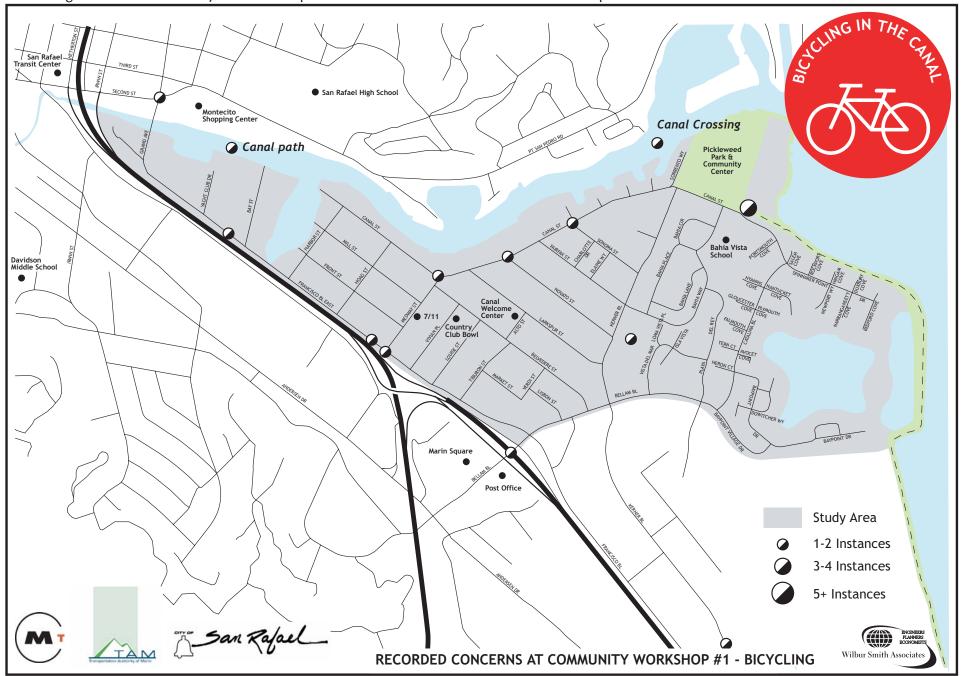
Canal Neighborhood Community - Based Transportation Plan - WORKSHOP #1 - Plan de Transportación del Vecindario de Canal con Base-Comunitaria



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